



HENRY RANKIN POORE COLLECTION: WEST WALL OF GALLERY XV

NEW ENGLAND LANDSCAPES BY MR. POORE

Henry Rankin Poore is a painter who has derived a great deal from Impressionism, and yet his pictures scarcely would be characterized as impressionistic, according to the generally understood—perhaps it would be better to say misunderstood—significance of the term. One is not dazzled by the juxtaposition of violently contrasting colors, yet, in nearly all his pictures, the artist has made use of complementary tints to secure luminosity and vibrant atmospheric quality. This is seen in particularly marked degree in the painting, No. 12, "The Oak," which hangs in the center of the west wall of Gallery XV. The effect is of early morning on a frosty day in late autumn. A sturdy oak, which has been cut down and sawed apart, occupies a portion of the immediate foreground; near by, stands a yoke of oxen, and beyond the larger mass of the tree is the suggestion of a man in a blue blouse. In the middleground, at the right, are slender poplars, beyond which masses of soft purple foliage indistinctly are seen through the haze, while at the left is a broad stretch of meadow. The sky, permeated by the early morning sunlight, is exceedingly luminous and has an exquisite opalescent quality. On close inspection, it will be noted that this effect of luminosity is due to the juxtaposition of broken tints of red, yellow, blue, and green, stronger in the upper reaches and more fused and delicate toward the horizon. But, throughout the picture, the color is singularly clear, pure, undefiled, and not devitalized by mixing. The picture is an admirable example of what might be called conservative impressionism. The effect of frost on the

ground, partly in sunlight, partly in shadow, is expressed with wonderfully realistic effect. This quality in the pictures recalls some of the famous pictures of Monet—to which, in this respect, it is scarcely inferior.

Another landscape, on the same wall, involving the same characteristics of method, though the subject is quite different, is "New England Winter" (No. 13). A foreground hillside is covered with snow, through which protrude large masses of rock. The valley beyond is dimly discerned through a wintry haze in which one obtains suggestions of foliage, houses, a distant snow-covered river and a wooded hillside with patches of snow showing here and there. The sky is characteristic of late afternoon—the sun shining faintly through the haze. This sky, while considerably lower in tone than that in the first picture, has been painted with the same broad touches of complementary colors, but colors of a somewhat greater intensity. A picture in which virtually the same composition is repeated is No. 18, "A Reverie of Winter," which hangs on the south wall. Here is the same snow-covered foreground, but with a denser, heavier sky, and with the landscape even less clearly defined, while in the foreground a red-coated man on a white horse, accompanied by two dogs, gives effective accent to the composition. This is a painting which grows upon one the longer it is studied. There is in it restfulness, brooding calm, and a certain dreaminess. The sun, half obscured by a veil of thin cloud, gives a soft effect of light which does not sharply reveal, but subtly suggests. There is a sense of mystery in the pearly-gray distance which is captivating.

Mr. Poore is one of the few painters who has the temerity to essay the painting of the sun itself shining directly into the face of the observer. There are three subjects of this kind in the collection. No. 4, "At the Source," presents a flock of sheep in the foreground gathered about a spring. The picture has in it the suggestion of late autumn or early winter; No. 11, "Under the Winter Sun," is a composition evidently involving a view of the same region, and it also has a stream with sheep in the foreground; No. 29, "Fallow Ground," gives a yoke of oxen in the foreground, hitched to a harrow. Of course, it is practically impossible for any person to look directly at the sun for more than the fraction of a moment, yet Mr. Poore, in these three pictures, suggests the dazzling effect gained from a quick glance, and impresses upon the observer the idea that the representation is true. The sun is not represented by a rigidly-defined white spot in the picture, but is a vibrant note of intense light in which commingle prismatic tints. The rays of the sun gradually diminish in intensity in the further reaches of the sky. In them one discovers the juxtaposed complementary colors, deftly worked together in thin, almost imperceptible lines in which the purity of the color is conserved. And as one looks intently at the sun and sky, he discerns the corona—perhaps not seen at first—and gains the impression of separate flashes of light of a rapidity of sequence incomputable, though appreciable. Mr. Poore has studied the sun, the sky, the clouds, and the effect of brilliant sunshine striking upon the earth. He has wellnigh mastered the relations of sunlight and shadow and he presents the truth as he has individually seen it—not as some other

artist before him has suggested it. He gives what nature has revealed specifically to him.

In the early days of his artistic career, Mr. Poore devoted himself largely to the painting of animals, and he has not forsaken that field of expression. The animals—dogs, horses, cattle or sheep—which appear in his pictures, are drawn and modeled with knowledge and belong in the environment given them. In his picture, "Fallow Ground," already referred to, the play of light and shadow on the backs of the animals somewhat suggests the treatment of Zugel, in the Fine Arts Academy's permanent collection—in Gallery I. This picture, "Fallow Ground," is one of Mr. Poore's most notable successes. The plowed field, a bit marshy in character, fairly glistens under the sun's rays. The effects of atmosphere and distance are expressed with rare truthfulness. The work, as a whole, fairly might be compared with a good picture by Mauve, though, in their respective methods of expression there is little in common between works by the two artists.

A particularly charming example of Mr. Poore's work is No. 9, "Burning Brush." This is one of the largest pictures in the collection, and in its breadth and simplicity of treatment is somewhat suggestive of the later and better work of Mr. Ranger. It presents a hillside in the foreground, with a man and a child standing near a burning brush heap, with a yoke of oxen at the right. The landscape indicates early winter. There are patches of snow in the depressions of the ground, a gray sky and the suggestion of chill in the air. This work is especially harmonious and beautiful in its coloring. No. 14, "The Shepherd," and No.



HENRY RANKIN POORE, A. N. A.: THE SHEPHERD



HENRY RANKIN POORE, A. N. A.: THE BOULDER

15, "Cattle at the Brook," are two characteristic winter subjects. In the first there is a shepherd standing in the foreground, with his dog at his side and a flock of sheep beyond him. There is a blue sky with cumulus clouds touched by the sunlight, and a brisk wind is blowing—as is evidenced by the movement of the shepherd's cloak and the powdery snow blown from the drifts. In the second picture, three cows are standing on a snow-covered hillside, by the side of a stream, under a gray sky of vibrant quality.

Among the paintings particularly notable for cloud effects are No. 1, "Mists Rising from the Marshes"—No. 7—"Marshland Harvest," and No. 21, "After the storm." The first represents a yoke of oxen drawing a load of hay across a marshy plain, toward the observer. The fog rises from the ground like steam, and through it one obtains only a suggestion of a mass of trees in the far distance. The sky is filled with rapidly-moving cumulus clouds, pearly in color, monumental in form, and mostly in shadow, but here and there reflecting brilliant sunshine. The landscape—brown in color, broken here and there by pools of limpid water reflecting the color of the sky—is painted with rare truthfulness to nature. The picture is a harmonious ensemble of exquisite quality. "Marshland Harvest" shows a hay-wagon drawn by six oxen halting on the edge of the river, while the hay is being transferred from the wagon to a boat. The oxen and wagon are standing in the water. The sky is filled with clouds through which a burst of sun-

shine falls upon the loaded wagon, the backs of the animals, and illuminates a stretch of the river. The effect is suggestive of clearing after a recent rain. The drawing of the animals and the gradations of lighting are expressed with fidelity to nature and most artistic effect. "After the Storm" gives a brown expanse of rolling landscape with a shepherd and sheep in the foreground, under a sunlit sky with cumulus clouds. There is something about this sky which suggests the work of Constable, and the painting of the landscape is not unlike the work of the French painter, Michel, though less hard in treatment.

Another landscape of great beauty is No. 20, a winter scene, "The Stage Road," a picture of pearly-grays and browns with snow in the foreground, through which the ruts of wagon wheels mark a winding road. This is a work of beautiful quality. A picture, not numbered, but representing a "Sheep Pasture" in early springtime, is one of the smaller works which is exceedingly beautiful. There has been rain recently, the ground is soft, there are pools of water here and there, and, leading from the foreground, deep wagon tracks have cut into the soft earth. In the middle distance, a flock of sheep is feeding on the fresh grass. The sky is gray-green with touches of crimson.

An effective picture is No. 6, "The Boulder," showing three men and a yoke of oxen on a frosty morning, dislodging a boulder from the earth. Behind the figures is a brushwood fire, the smoke of which forms a background for the group of men and blows across the standing oxen. The men and oxen

are well drawn, the suggestion of movement is admirably expressed, the landscape is true to nature and the coloring throughout is most harmonious. No. 27, "A Misty Morning," is a charming subject of impressionistic quality, and No. 32, "Yoked Steers," is another splendid representation of animals in brilliant sunshine. Nos. 24 and 25, "Melting Snow" and "Open Winter," are two of the most beautiful of the small pictures.

Nos. 2 and 3 are landscape effects in autumn. In the first, "In the Clearing," two horses stand in the middleground near a log evidently to be hauled away. Beyond the horses a man is kindling a fire in the underbrush, the smoke of which rises among the trees. This is somewhat suggestive of Mauve in treatment. No. 3, "Autumnal Woodland," is a wood interior with masses of rock projecting here and there, and the intervening earth almost covered with autumn leaves.

No. 26, "Breaking Up," is a late winter subject, with touches of melting snow in the foreground, with sheep scattered here and there. And this is a canvas in which choice of subject and method admirably contribute to a beautiful, harmonious, and artistic result.

This brief review does not cover all the pictures in the collection; every one has its own message and each is worthy of careful attention. This is one of the most notable small collections which has been shown at the Albright Art Gallery thus far.

In this connection, it is interesting to note the fact that Mr. Poore paints his pictures directly from nature—even his expressions of midwinter. He is not content with jotting down a few hasty out-door sketches with half benumbed fingers, and, later, leisurely completing them in his studio—far away from the original source of his inspiration; instead, he remains face to face with nature, from the first stroke of the brush to the last, and this accounts, largely, for the vital quality in his work, in which breathes the atmosphere of out-doors in rugged weather. This is made possible by the fact that Mr. Poore uses a movable studio—practically a small, wooden room set on runners, close to the ground (in order to avoid the plunging view of the foreground) yet high enough to pass over outcropping masses of rock in a rough bit of country. This "studio" is fitted with plate-glass windows, one in each of the four sides; an oil stove, double floors, wool and fur rugs, etc., and the necessary complement of stools and easel, and supply of canvases and materials. It is drawn by two or four oxen, as circumstances demand.

Thus, Mr. Poore has comfortably painted his winter pictures during the last three or four years, and he has been able to accomplish much in this way that would have been practically impossible otherwise.

THE PAINTINGS BY MR. CHASE

William M. Chase, as a painter, has few equals among the living artists of to-day.



HENRY RANKIN POORE, A. N. A.: MARSHLAND HARVEST